1/27/68

Dear Jerry,

Went back to New Orleans when asked to, returning just before Xmas, and am still swamped by the accumulations of the relatively long absences.

Lil celebrated not taking Christmas off to visit the family by getting a cold that, as usual with her, turned into a kindof laryngitis and my own bad joke that she is "unspeakable". I caught some kind of cold in the left shoulder when in N.O. (and an 80-degree temperature and air-conditioner combination) that lingers, hurts, and slows me down. Finally went to the doctor, who prescribed a drug that raised hell with my ulcer. In fact, having developed and healed the ulcer without then being aware of it, I for the first time learned what an ulcer feels like. I do not like it!

[illegible]'s letter requires a short, pointed answer. I have held off not to embarrass you. Any objections? "Valued friend" indeed! Or should I just photocopy the epilogic to WILL and mail that, underlined.

I do not think you understand the Thompson opus and ploy. It is as brilliant as it is dishonest. It is a pretended criticism that, stripped down, is a formula to salvage the distressed government. It could be a CIA job. Aside from his generous thefts, what Thompson has done, in the guise of criticism (and he is careful to disassociate himself from that awful crew, "critics"), is to show the government that it cannot avoid acknowledgement of some error, that today everyone knows there was error, but that it can adhere to its basic conclusions about Oswald, the time and place the President was first hit, the fatal shots coming from the sixth-floor window and that there was no conspiracy.

In short, it is the only possible way for the government, today, to stick to the essence of its story. He merely throws in a couple of other books who just happened to have the same idea at the same time and to have, entirely independently, selected the same time and place for its implimentation. It is too early to forecast the result.

John and I long ago discussed the editing of the books into a hardback set. The subtitles would then serve to identify the parts. The problem is finding the publisher with the interest....The fifth one is ready now. The problem here is money. I am not now going to risk the additional indebtedness. Instead, I'm trying a little thing with collateral rights that has little chance, I fear. John has been silent about Dell. I feel more strongly than ever that I should now be filing a number of suits. Glad you found Turner bright. He is also a literary lightfingers, whose thievery is not new in the January issue (which I haven't seen-the NYTimes read parts of it to me). They regularly use my material, pretending it is their own, while Turner wrotes nasty personal stuff, for example in Penn Jones' Forgive My Grief II (153). These people, for all their money and reputation, have been totally unable to come up with anything new in the field, so they steal and pretend originality to the point where they actually believe it. Ask Hal to tell you how, on the night of [illegible] Fatigue last year, [illegible] unable to [illegible], he nonetheless prodded [illegible] to admit publicly that I am [illegible], to object [illegible] their obscene [illegible]. If you can get an extra copy, I'd like it, please. None [illegible] here....Gotta [illegible] work. [illegible] luck, esp. to your wife. Sincerely,